

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000405

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY  
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER  
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS  
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD  
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ  
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, DS/IP/OPO, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/16/2016

TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#) [HOSTAGES](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: HOSTAGE-TAKING, SITREP # 28

REF: LAGOS 401

Classified By: Acting Political/Economic Chief Shannon Ross  
for reasons 1.4 (D/E).

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Hostage Welfare Update  
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1. (C) NGO Director Judy Asuni said the package of medicine, the t-shirts and other morale boosters picked up from Shell's Warri clinic on Saturday were delivered as of 10:00 a.m.

2. (C) Willbros representatives reported the Oswalt family has arranged a 14:00 CST press conference with three major networks to launch an appeal for the release of Oswalt and the other hostages. LegAtt will provide support.

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Hostage Negotiations  
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3. (C) Shell Executive Vice-President Ann Pickard told us in a meeting with President Obasanjo and Minister of State for Petroleum Daukoru last Friday, President Obasanjo said he was "not losing sleep" regarding the hostage situation as he generally does when he is worried. Obasanjo said he was not worried about lost production and revenue, saying the hostages are more important. He promised the military would not be involved until after the hostages were released, and he said development efforts in the Delta had to be ratcheted up and that the current Rivers State initiative was good but they did not have the luxury of waiting to start similar programs in Delta and Bayelsa. He intimated the Federal Government would step in to handle the ineffective Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), and raised the prospect its budget might be slashed. Minister Daukoru stated the hostages would be released within a week, which Pickard assessed as another promise of imminent release lacking tangible supporting details. Further details to follow septel.

4. (C) Delta State Secretary to the State Government (SSG) Uduaghan, a representative from the State Security Service (SSS), and HMG and USG representatives will meet to discuss negotiation status and strategy tonight. Significantly, this is the first time the GON or Delta State have reached out for advisory assistance.

5. (C) Shell sources report Delta State Governor James Ibori is concerned about investigations of his assets in the UK and US and "paranoid" about our presence in his state. Ibori is reportedly even more paranoid knowing FBI officers are in Warri, and he does not seem to believe they are there for negotiations assistance only. The Governor recently sent a text message to Willbros President Clay Etheridge apologizing that there was no news but he was working hard.

6. (C) George Timinimi, a leader in the Federation of Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC) and one-time negotiator, was attacked over the weekend by youths in fatigues, who sources identified as part of the kidnappers.

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Energy Update  
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7. (C) Sources at AGIP report an explosion at their Tebidaba-Brass pipeline 15 kilometers from Brass, Bayelsa State. They report loss of 75,000 barrels per day (bpd). AGIP reports three bundles of undetonated dynamite were found on the pipeline. Damage assessment crews have not yet been able to enter the area to estimate a timeframe for repairs. Shell reports dynamite has been used to destroy their pipelines since December 2005. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack, but one source reported the

explosion was ordered by the Managing Director of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to foment continued instability in the area and will shift the blame to the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).

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Delta Working Group Review  
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18. (C) The Delta Working Group (DWG) met March 20 to share information on latest developments in the Delta. Shell said there were threats against their Bonga offshore facility. (Note: Bonga is over 100km offshore. Shell said militants would have to suborn Nigerian navy boats to make an attack. End Note.) Addax Petroleum Services reported that they no longer allowed employees to use cellphones offshore and that employees would have to use a ship phone to make calls. Another oil services company, Hercules, said that it was withdrawing workers from the Warri area for the week of the census (March 21 - 25) after threats from Ijaw youths in the area. Exxon/Mobil is still investigating the March 31 deadline set out by the Martyr's Brigade in the press for payment of compensation from a 1998 oil spill.

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Military Update  
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19. (C) There were no significant military developments.

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Media Update  
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110. (SBU) There has been significant media coverage of statements made by the U.S. Ambassador last week, promising further support for long-term efforts to develop the Niger Delta after the hostages are released. CNN's Inside Africa program over the weekend spotlighted MEND. Presidential spokesman Femi Fani-Kayode called the group a criminal element with interests only in lining their own pockets.

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Consular Update  
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111. (C) There have been no reports of additional attacks on AmCits. One mission Conoff and one FEST member are in Warri monitoring negotiations and prepared to assist with repatriation. The UK also has a consular officer in Warri to monitor negotiations and assist with repatriation. The head of Shell Security is on standby for repatriation assistance.  
HOWE